

232. *The Recompence of Virtue :*
O R,
The Just Man's Character.

Set forth in a
SERMON
Preach'd at the
FUNERAL
O F

Mr. Richard Blundel,
An Eminent Surgeon of this City ;
Who Departed this Life May 27. 1718. in the
59th Year of his Age ; and was Interr'd in
the Church of St. Lawrence-Jewry the 2d of
June following.

Published at the Request of his Dearest Relations
then present.

By NATH. MARSHAL, D. D. Rector of the U-
nited Parishes of St. Vedast (alias Fosters) and St. Mi-
chael-le-Quern, London; and Chaplain in Ordinary
to His M A J E S T Y.

L O N D O N:

Printed by H. P. for WILLIAM TAYLOR, at the
Ship in Pater-Noster-Row: And HENRY CLEMENTS,
at the Half Moon in St. Paul's Church Yard. 1718.



PSALM xxxvii. 37.

Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright; for the end of that Man is Peace.

Or, as the version of our Psalter renders it.
Vers. 38.

Keep Innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for that shall bring a Man Peace at the last.



THE whole Psalm contains in it little more than a sett of Observations upon the different Portions of the Righteous and the Wicked; intended to perswade the former to acquiesce in the Dealings of God with both.

It could not be dissembled, that the evil Doers had sometimes their Run of Prosperity, and more than their Share of worldly Advantages; as, on the other hand, the Righteous were plunged, now and then, into Circumstances of Distress and Difficulty. This was setting the Case of good Men in the most unfavourable Light, and viewing their Condition on the darkest side of it; as it was posting wicked Men upon the Ground of

most Advantage to them, and representing their Circumstances under the most hopeful Appearances. Yet even upon the foot of this Comparison, the Conclusion was observed by the Psalmist, to be in Favour of the Righteous. For *whereas the end of the Ungodly* was, that (a) *they should be rooted out at the last*; the Perfect and Upright would then find Peace; their *Innocence* and *Integrity* would be sure to obtain it for them.

But tho' this be the *only* Certainty, which good Men may depend upon, without any *one* Exception; yet there are many Probabilities in their Favour, many intermediate Chances and fair Prospects, for the Success of their *present* Aims and Designs. Their Hope doth not lye, *all*, in Reversion; tho' the *main* of it chuses to center there. Their Pretensions to this World, and to its several Felicities, do still subsist; they are *submitted* indeed, but not *surrender'd*.

Wherefore, in pursuance of the general Design in view with holy *David*, when he compos'd this Psalm, we will consider the Case of the Righteous and the Wicked somewhat more particularly; that we may observe, upon the whole, where the true point of Interest should at last be fix'd, and where the Balance of Advantage turns; whether steady Principles, and suitable Practices, be not far more eligible, than Actions which proceed at random, without any Compass to steer by, or any Rule to adjust them.

Now that this Case may be truly stated, and this whole matter laid before you in its proper Light,

(a) v. 39. *as it stands in our Psalter.*

we will take a more distinct Survey of the Righteous and the Wicked in these several Postures ;

1st, As they may, (both of them,) be in a State of *Prospect* and *Pursuit*, with regard to the Advantages of the present Life.

2^{dly}, As those *Prospects* may have succeeded with them ; and they may, each of them, be consider'd as in a State of *Enjoyment*.

3^{dly}, As they may, both, have failed in their respective *Pursuits*, and so may be consider'd as in a State of *Disappointment*.

These three Particulars will take in the whole Compass of their present Life : And as to the Conclusion of it, I shall observe to you in the

4th place, The very great Difference and Disproportion which there must be between the one and the other in it.

When I have gone thro' these several Particulars ; I shall, *Lastly*, apply the whole to the mournful Occasion of our present Assembly.

1st. Then, we are to take our Survey of the Righteous and the Wicked, as they may, both of them, be in a State of *Prospect* and *Pursuit*, with regard to the Advantages of the present Life.

This is the Case, by far, most general ; since few of either sort, live to see an end of all their *Prospects*. Somewhat or other they still have upon the Anvil, which lies unfinish'd, and waits for the Results of Time, and the opening of favourable Occasions. The Question then will be, for which of the two, these Occasions are most likely to open favourably? We agree, that there is, and can

can be, here no Certainty, nor any Rule laid down, which will not find in Experience *Exceptions* made to it. The *likelihood* of Events, whilst they have a confess'd Uncertainty and Contingency, is our present Enquiry.

Now the Providence of God will leave us little Room to doubt, which side of the Question hath the most promising Appearances. He hath declar'd, that (b) *he will not cast away a perfect Man, neither will he help the evil Doers*: That (c) *the Way of the Wicked is as Darkness; but that the Path of the Just, is as the perfect Day*: That (d) *the Righteousness of the Perfect shall direct his Way, but the Wicked shall fall by his own Wickedness*. That the (e) *Curse of the Lord is in the House of the Wicked; but he blesteth the Habitation of the Just*. That the (f) *Hope of the Righteous shall be Gladness; but the Expectation of the Wicked shall perish*.

That all the Recompence of good Men might not be post-pon'd to an invisible State; these are the Declarations of God in their Favour, with regard to the Things which are *seen and temporal*; and it is easy to imagine, that these may be perform'd to them, without the Interposal of Miracles to secure the Effect of them.

Contrary Observations made upon the Issue of Things are often mistaken, and form'd upon erroneous Estimates; and a few *Exceptions* to the Rule, do rather confirm than weaken it. Suppose a particular Providence, and you cannot

(b) Job 8. 20. (c) Prov. 4. 19, 18. (d) Prov. 11. 5. (e) Prov. 3. 33. (f) Prov. 10. 28.

but suppose with it, such a Care of Virtue, as will not *ordinarily* leave it naked and defenceless. In the *Psalms* whence my Text is taken, its holy Author appealed to the Experience of Mankind, for an Answer to the Question which is now before us; whether the *Righteous* was ever observ'd (g) *to be forsaken, or his Seed begging their Bread?* Whether any Advantages, accruing to the Ungodly, were ever permanent, or of long Continuance? Tho' he had seen the latter (h) *in great Power, and flourishing like a green Bay-tree;* yet (saith he) *I went by, and lo he was gone; I sought him, but his Place could no where be found.*

Nor is the natural Course of Things without its Tendency to maintain the Cause of the *Righteous*, and to oppose the Wicked in his several Pretensions. *e. g.* The most hidden Wickedness is seldom so manag'd, as to continue long a Secret; and a Discovery soon will blast it. Reputation will follow Virtue, and will stand up in Aid of the Purposes, which are form'd upon it. The Slight of the Hand, and the Cunning of the Heart, may carry on some *one particular* View to its desir'd Conclusion; but the *main* Thread of Life proceeds with most Advantage, when it is least involv'd and entangl'd.

Ask the Sinner, to whose dark Designs the use of Trick and Fraud is necessary, Whether, if he thought he could succeed in the Way of Innocence, he would not rather chuse it? He doubtless would; and, if he would judge impartially upon the *main Issues of Life*, he would find his

(g) *Ver. 25. in our Psalter.* (h) *Ver. 36. 37, ibid.*

Integrity his best and his surest Guide to them. But his Passion blinds him, and his Eagerness of the Prey, makes him overlook the Thorns and Briars, the Troubles and the Hazards, which encumber the Way he takes to be the shortest. If he comes off without a Wound or Scratch from them, he is more indebted to his Luck, than his Discretion. For the Odds, at setting out, are great against him, that he will never be able to force his Passage thro' them.

But now the Man who hath no *crooked Meaning*, hath a *plain Way* before him; and if he moves not *so fast* to his desir'd Conclusion, he gets to it, however, with *greater Security*, and with *less Damage*. By suffering his Principles to keep him Company, he hath great Refreshment and Support under all his Difficulties; and by the Aid of the one, is the better enabled to conquer the other. For this may with great Truth and Justice be observ'd of Virtue; that for *one Hindrance* which it throws into any Man's way, it furnishes *many Helps* to him, in the Course of his worldly Pursuits: It secures to him the Favour of God and Man; whilst it's contrary must expect that *both* will oppose him.

Exceptions, 'tis agreed, there are to this *Rule*, permitted by Providence, and made by a naughty World, and by the various Contingencies, to which this mutable, uncertain, State of Things will ever be obnoxious. But if, at *setting out*, the good Man and the wicked had only the *same Chances* for the Success of their several Aims and Prospects; certainly the good Man's Choice would

would be far the wisest, for the many other Advantages inseparably cleaving to it.

Many Vices, 'tis certain, have an apparent Tendency to cross upon those Designs, which their *contrary Virtues* favour. And the Instances of this are far more numerous and more extensive, than any opposite Examples, where Trick and Knavery gain a Point, which could not have been gain'd by upright and honest Practice.

Nor is the Point, when gain'd; nor the Result of their several Designs, when most successful, of equal Moment to Men of such different Characters and Denominations. For,

2dly, If we proceed in our Survey, and consider them both, as in a State of *Enjoyment*, upon the favourable Issue of their respective *Pursuits*; we shall observe the good Man to have great Advantage; and that the *Righteous*, in this Point, is not only more *excellent than his Neighbour*, but, upon the whole of his Case, more *happy* too.

The Time must come, they both well know, when the smoothest and most flourishing Life shall receive its Ruffles and Discomposures, shall wither, and at last die away: So that in the midst of Fulness and Plenty, Want and Destitution are in View with both of them; which Time advances towards them, by Steps very sure, howsoever gradual. Now the Prospect of this must differently affect them, as they are differently provided with Comforts and Resources.

They who have no Expectations beyond their present *Enjoyments*, whose only Hope is to perish like Beasts, and even that Hope so ill assur'd to
B them

them, that it hath at most but a bare *Possibility* to support it, with almost, if not altogether an *Impossibility*, that it should ever be made good to them, (these Men, I say,) must be content to lower the Value of their best Enjoyments, from the ugly Conclusion, which cannot but succeed them. If they resolve to make the most of them, because they know they have but a little Time in them; they will, in all likelihood, contract even that *little Time*, and make it *less*, by labouring to make the *most* of it.

Mean while, with this Resolution, they must form another, which perhaps they will not find themselves able to keep; and this must be to live without any Thought or Forecast, to drown themselves in an animal and sensual Life, never to consider the Issues of Futurity, nor what shall become of their better Part, the thinking Thing within them, whose Powers they must suppress by all possible Shifts and Devices; which yet will be now and then exerted, to the infinite Terror of the hopeless Sinner: But, I say, any tolerable Ease or Comfort which he can take in his highest Felicities, must be owing to the Absence or Stupefaction of common Sense and Understanding. For a Man, who plays upon the Brink of a Precipice, must surely be blind or mad. Now such a Precipice Sin must be to the bold Adventurer, who indulges himself in it upon *any* sort of Principles: Since *no* sort of Principles can assure him, that he shall not be cast headlong thence, within a very little Time, into endless and remediless Perdition. The Frolick and Gaiety wherewith he

he reports upon it, are no better Evidences of his Happiness, than any little Pleasantries, or Witticisms, of a Madman, prove him to be in a right Mind. Whatever his *Enjoyments* to himself may be; by the sober and sensible Part of Mankind, they will ever be consider'd with an equal Mixture of Horror and Compassion. Now this is so truly the Case of every wicked Man, that I cannot find out Words, which will more justly or properly represent it. Death and Destruction open wide their Mouths for him; he either sees not his Danger, and therefore plays upon the *Borders* of it, till, sooner or later, he at last falls into it: Or else, if he really sees it, the Sight must certainly be so shocking to him, that he can have very little Satisfaction, whilst it stares him in the Face.

The good Man's *Case*, like his *Conduct*, is the very Reverse of what hath been here describ'd to you. His *Enjoyments* have none of these *Al-
lays* nor *Drawbacks*: Whatsoever there is in them, comes free and pure to him. The View of their Conclusion needs not dismay nor terrify him, nor sower the present Moment with any dark *Pre-
sages* of those which shall succeed it. That all these Things must have an End, he knows, as well as the *Sinner*; and can look upon its *Ap-
proaches* towards him with all Assurance, that the Change will be to his Advantage. As he contracts no fatal *Blemish* from the *Felicities* of Life and Fortune, they leave no Sting behind them, and do not darken the Prospect he hath before him, of future, and farther, and infinitely

greater Good. The Measure of worldly Comforts, which is best adapted to his Personal Interest, and most consistent with his Social Relations, and every Way most suitable to the State and Posture, which he stands in, he hath all Liberty to use; and may use it with the more Advantage, for the Prudence and Temper he observes in it.

Virtue is ordinarily a plain and passable Road, less incumber'd than that of Vice; is safer and surer, and in all Respects more commodious. It's Pleasures are more compos'd and calm; they jade not the Mind either in the *Pursuit* or *Enjoyment* of them: Nor are they succeeded by that Remorse and Vexation of Spirit, which are the known Attendants upon lawless Gratifications.

Besides, the Hopes of a good Man are the more likely to be answer'd, when his *Pursuits* are successful, because his Expectations have not been suffer'd to swell immoderately, nor to eat out Enjoyment before it reaches him. And then (I say) he hath *Hope* from the very Circumstance, which to the Sinner is most forlorn and *hopeless*, and yet must certainly befall him; for the (i) *Righteous hath Hope in his Death*.

We have now consider'd them both, as in a State of *Prospect* and *Pursuit*; and as those *Prospects* and *Pursuits* may have succeeded with them, and so may have enter'd them upon a State of *Enjoyment*.

But as Time and Chance happen here to all

(i) Prov. 14. 32.

Men, to the *Wicked*, no less than to the *Righteous*; it must be agreed to be possible, and is often a Case of Fact, that both of them may, and do, fail in their respective *Pursuits*; and, under this View, are to be consider'd, as in a State of *Disappointment*: Which is the *third* of those Postures, wherein I propounded to represent them: And this, of the three, will least endure a Comparison.

For when the Comforts of this World fail the Sinner, who hath all his Hope, and all his Treasure, in it; What a Load of Sorrow must oppress him? How forlorn and deplorable must his Condition be, whom Darkness surrounds on all Hands; who hath Misery to encounter here, and nothing but Misery to expect hereafter? Who hath sacrific'd the Peace and Purity of his Conscience to those unhappy *Pursuits*, which have all along entertain'd him with anxious Cares and Fears, repaid him at last with *Disappointment* and Vexation, and left him nothing in *Prospect* to support him amidst all these Pressures, but, instead of it, obnoxious to the Justice of an offended Deity, and to all the Terrors of his Wrath, who, in his *Anger*, is a *consuming Fire*?

Let him then observe, from hence, the prodigious Blunder he committed at setting out; when he left his Principles behind him, with as little Assurance of Success from leaving them, as he might have had from abiding by them. Perhaps the very Cause of his *Disappointments* is founded in his *Vices*; and his Health, Reputation, or Fortune, or whatsoever be the Quarter from whence his Afflictions gall him, suffer directly from his
sinful

sinful Courses. How dreadful and insupportable under such Circumstances must be the Reflections he passes upon his own Folly! How raging the Remorse, which gnaws upon his Conscience, and preys perhaps upon his *Vitals* too! How pungent the Sting of that *Worm*, which hath a *Moth* attending it to corrupt his *Treasure*, at the same time wherein it over-spreads his Mind with the Horrors of Despondency, and conveys, it may be, *Rottiness* to his *Bones* besides!

But be it so, that his Vices do not directly lay him under any of these Distresses; that his Misfortunes befall him, in the common Course of things, and thro' the ordinary Contingencies of human Life: Yet still they will be attended, in his Case, with the peculiar Aggravation, of leaving him no Resources, no Comforts, to betake to. He hath staked the Sum total of his Happiness upon a Chance which hath failed him; and risked, as it were, his whole Estate, upon the Cast of a Die, which hath not succeeded. If now there were any thing in Reversion, of weight enough to buoy up his sinking Spirits; if any Glimpse of Light could be let in upon his gloomy, dejected, Mind, from a favourable prospect of Futurity; his present Burden might be render'd by it somewhat more supportable. But a wounded Spirit, added to other Calamities, presses too hard upon human Nature, to be, in any manner, tolerable. Hope is the *Anchor of the Soul*, which keeps it from sinking, in the Storms and Tempests of Life. Take away this Resource from it, and you leave it utterly forlorn and destitute. But now what
Hope

Hope is left to him of retrieving *elsewhere*, the Misfortunes which *here* befall him, when all the Arguments, which establish a State beyond the Grave, conclude undeniably, that he must be worsted by it.

The Man of Religion hath a very different View before him, whenever his Lot proves here unfavourable. When his Religion lays him under Circumstances of Distress and Difficulty (which yet are much oftner brought upon Men by their *Vices*, than they are by their *Virtues*) the Measure of his Supports and Comforts rises always in Proportion to them; and the Hope which he derives from the *other* side of the Grave, is evermore so much the brighter and the stronger, as the Misfortunes which befall him on *this* Side of it, are, more or less, chargeable to the Account of his Virtues. *Then* he can even rejoyce in those Tribulations and Reproaches, to which, either the Gospel it self, or any important Truth of it, shall happen to expose him. But this, we may observe, is a Case which we seldom meet with; and more rarely far than with the Case of those, who suffer for their Sins, without any Recompence, and with great Aggravations entail'd upon their Misery.

When a good Man miscarries, the common Chances of Life must usually account for it; which he would not have avoided by *sacrificing* his Goodness to them. But then, by *preserving* it, he hath infinite Advantages. By not over-charging his Expectations, nor depending upon too much, from any temporal Felicities, the Disappointment,

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pointment, when it comes, sits the easier and lighter on him; and he can possess his Soul in the greater *Patience* from the Regularity of his Desires, and from his habitual Submission to the Will of Providence. When the *Bulk* of his Treasure is safely lodg'd, he may be the less concern'd for any Misadventures happening to some scatter'd *Parts* of it.

Above all; when he considers God as his Friend, and Heaven as his Inheritance, he will thence derive such unspeakable Consolation, as may well be set in the Balance against the sorest Distresses of the present Season. (k) *In the multitude of the Sorrows which I had in my Heart, (saith our holy Psalmist to God) thy Comforts have refresh'd my Soul.* When he considers the Misfortunes of Life, not as the *Inflictions* of an angry Judge, but as the *Wounds of a Friend*, labouring to refine his Dross, and improve his Nature, and to fit him for nearer and more intimate Communications with the Father of Spirits; the Reluctances of Flesh and Blood will certainly be mollify'd; his Soul will be melted down into the humblest Adorations of the Hand which chastens him; and he will acknowledge it, in the Conclusion, to have been good for him, that he was so afflicted.

The three Particulars, which have hitherto been insisted on, take in the whole Compass of our present Life; which is always to be found in one of these Postures; either in a State of *Prospect and Pursuit*; or else of *Possession and Enjoyment*; or finally of *Disappointment and Vexation*.

(k) Psal. 94. 19.

Now, if upon weighing the several Cases of the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*, under each of these Circumstances, the Balance turns *usually* in Favour of the *Righteous*; if this be the *Rule*, whereby we are *ordinarily* to judge of them, whatsoever *Exceptions* it may *sometimes* meet with; then I think it apparent, that the *Wicked* carve for themselves but *scurvily*, with respect to this World, and to the only Advantage they have any Pretence of claiming: And therefore even with respect to the Issues of the *Life which now is*; we may well acquiesce in that Declaration of God to Man, which we find recorded in the Book of *Job*: (1) *Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from Evil is Understanding.*

But then *4thly* and *lastly*, from the Conclusion of this *Life*, it must be infinitely more so; because of the great and never-failing Difference, which will then be made between the one and the other.

There will be divers *Exceptions* to any *Rule*, which can be here laid down, with regard to Things so contingent and uncertain, as the Events of this various, unsettled *Life*: These *Exceptions* are wisely order'd, that we may thence collect an indubitable Assurance of a State beyond it, wherein we may depend upon a more exact Retribution. Yet hence it is, that we have no *invariable Distinction* made upon the present Scene, between the good Man and the *Wicked*. Whatever the *usual* Tendency of Things may be, there is *now and then* a Failure in the Course of them: And the Man of Religion sometimes miscarries, when the Man of *none* shall thrive and prosper.

(1) Job 28. 28.

The Man of Religion chose, however, prudently, even for *this* World, because he chose, at setting out, with the most promising Appearances of Success to his *Pursuits*. But for these few *Exceptions* to our *Rule*, there will be an abundant Recompence, when this Life shall fail us, and therewith shall be open'd the boundless Prospect of Eternity.

What would not the dying Sinner give for the least Glimpse of Hope in his departing Moments? What would he not sacrifice to any Assurance, even of *that* forlorn Expectation, that he might sink softly into nothing, without any Account or Remembrance of his Life and Conduct? The Entertainments he hath had from them, are vanish'd like a Dream or Shadow; and have left him nothing to reflect on but the Horrors of his Guilt, nor any Prospect but of the Vengeance, which is now overtaking him. This is the hopeful Conclusion of all his pleasing Images, and of all his thoughtless and vain Amusements. *Like as the Smoak vanisheth, so are they driven away; and like as Wax melteth at the Fire, so do the Ungodly perish at the Presence of God.*

But then the Righteous are glad and rejoyce before him. There might be Reason even for *them* to tremble at the Approaches of his Presence, were it not soften'd to them by a Mediator's Interest, which hath entitl'd them to the *Adoption of Children*, and privileg'd them to cry *Abba, Father*. But in *this* View of their Case, with nothing to fear, they have a great deal to hope; that the Conclusion of their present Life, will either improve their Felicities, or wipe away all their Sorrows.

rows. So that in the greatest Abundance of worldly Good, they can have no Apprehension, that a Change will hurt them; and in the Calamities of Life, they are sure of a blessed Removal from them. *Peace* must be the Consequence upon either Representation; which is more than can be well affirm'd of the most unallay'd Advantages in Possession of the Wicked. But *Peace* undisturb'd, with *Fulness of Joy, and Pleasure* for evermore, will be the sure, never-failing Entertainments of the Innocent and Upright, when this Life is Ended, and with it all its Discomposures, are laid asleep. (m) *Where the Wicked cease from troubling, and where the Weary be at Rest.* (n) *Where the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever.* (o) *When the ransomed of the Lord shall come unto Zion, with Songs and everlasting Joy upon their Heads; where they shall obtain Joy and Gladness, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away.*

I have now gone thro' the several Particulars which were propounded to you from my Text: And I persuade my self, that you have already anticipated the Application I design to make of it: For you must have mark'd this Upright Man, whose Lifeless Remains are now before you, throughout the whole Course and Tenour of his Conduct; so that I fear no Imputation of Flattery, nor even of Partiality, when I recommend to

(m) Job 3. 17. (n) Isa. 32. 17. (o) Isa. 35. 10.

you his Example in *doing Justly*, and *loving Mercy*, and *walking humbly with his God*.

How serviceable he was in a very useful Profession; with what *Charity* to the *Poor*, what *Justice* to the *Rich*, what *Compassion* to *All*, he employ'd the Skill in it, which so eminently distinguish'd him, he hath many living Witnesses to proclaim for him.

There is no room to flourish upon a Character so deserving, which Panegyric would find it as hard to magnify, as Malice or Envy to diminish it.

He had *set the Lord always before him*; and therefore was never unmindful of his All-seeing Presence; nor could the most unguarded Seasons betray him into the least Appearances of being so: He was truly zealous for his God, and a known Advocate for Religion, wherever it wanted one; and he was as *able to defend*, as he was *willing to practice*, and *fitted to adorn* it.

His Piety was real and unaffected; equally free from *Disguise*, and *Ostentation*; from the *Excesses of Heat*, and the *Extremities of Cold*; from the *Giddiness of Enthusiasm*, and the *Stiffness of Formality*; from the *Rigours of the Precise*, and the *Liberties of the Licentious*. For he had an *Head* which knew how to prescribe fit Measures for his *Heart*; and thus, as his *Conscience* was *well inform'd*, so his *Knowledge* was *practical*; and they lent each other a mutual Help.

His Love of his Country was sincere and cordial: He had a conscientious and true Concern for it's present Settlement in Church and State; nor did his Passion for the one swallow up his *Affection*

Affection to the other. For he was throughly persuaded they would, both, thrive best in each other's Company, when they should *take sweet Council, and go together into the House of God as Friends:* And therefore he never made a Merit of *putting asunder*, what the Reason of Things, and the Providence of God had apparently *joyn'd together*.

Simplicity and *Godly Sincerity* were so peculiarly his Ornaments, that he delighted in none besides them: He valu'd *Appearances* no farther, nor us'd them for any other Purpose, than as a *Language* to convey the *Sentiments* of his Soul. He rightly judg'd, that *good Meaning* was a *Beauty*, which wanted no *Art* to dress it, nor Labour to force it upon the Notice of Mankind. And, I believe, no one was ever advanc'd to his Pitch of Eminence, in any Calling, with less Endeavour, on his own Part, to raise him up to it.

As a Friend; (I speak it with Gratitude and Experience) I never knew any, who more excelled in all the Offices flowing from that Relation: And indeed *no* Relation in Life had reason to complain of him; but *each* had, to commend, and esteem, and to bless God for him.

His Conduct, upon the whole, was all of a piece; Uniform and Consistent in every Part of it. Here he opened the *first* Scenes of Business, and here he closed the *last* of them; so that I could not, if I would, in this Place, misrepresent him.

And as we now have *marked* his Character, and beheld this *upright* Man in all the Grace and Beauty of his *Virtues*; so we may proceed to observe the *Blessings* attending him, which my Text hath Entailed upon the Persons described in it. As

As it is no Man's Disparagement, that he was not born to Eminence, and the Splendor of Life; I shall not scruple to say, that from no very promising, nor auspicious Prospects, and with an original bent of Inclination, favouring (a) other Studies, he soon arrived to a distinguish'd degree of Proficiency in a Calling which he did not chuse; and yet I have frequently heard him thankful to that Providence, which fixed him in it, for the Opportunities it gave him of being more serviceable to his Family and Friends, than he might probably have been, had he succeeded in his first Desires.

His Fortune grew by degrees to be so much in his Power, that his Soul must have sunk into his Wealth, if, according to the common Guise of the World, as *Riches increased*, he had set his Heart upon them. But he chose rather to be rich in good Works, and rich towards God, with whom a Treasure laid up is always sure of producing the best and the largest Interest.

He was indeed so far from courting the Opportunities of Gain, that, perhaps, no Man was ever more courted by them, who chose to leave fewer Signs of it behind him. And yet the whole Tenour of his Life was as far removed from Prodigality, as it was from Avarice.

The Enjoyments of the World he knew how to use in proper Seasons and Proportions; and

(a) He much desired to have been bred a Divine; and was well qualified to have been so, by an uncommon Progress in the Preparatory Studies and in Classical Learning; of which, to the last, he retained a very lively Taste.



he was successful enough in the Course of his worldly Pursuits, to have indulged himself in any measure of them, which Reason and Religion could allow to him. But still he was sensible, that the truest use of them, was not to indulge too much to them.

His Constitution, tho' none of the strongest, did not, however, break in much, nor often, either upon his Recreation or his Business: But after a smooth and easy Passage of Life, with little Ruffle or Discomposure, before the Infirmities of Age had, to any observable degree, either lessened the Comforts, or impaired the Vigor of it, the Distemper seized him, which proved fatal to him: And even in this Particular, the *Desire of his Soul was satisfied.*

For from the Genius of a Disease which had sometimes attack'd him, he was a little apprehensive of a lingering and painful Death; and I have often heard him, with a due Submission to the Will of Providence, solicitous to avoid such a Tryal of his Patience: So it pleased God, that he was not *denied the Request of his Lips*; but, as one habitually prepared to attend the Summons of his Master, he was called out of the World upon little Notice, not indeed without some antecedent Presages of his Change, yet without any shocking Circumstances of Pain or Struggle.

As he well understood the Brittleness of Human Life, he never depended upon its long Continuance, never indeed imagin'd, he should see the Period, to which it was, in Fact, extended with him. He had no Reason to be afraid of his Dissolution; and therefore was not backward to entertain

certain the Thoughts of it: For it appears from some written Remains which he hath left behind him, that the Subject was familiar to him; that it had frequently employ'd his Meditations in his vacant Seasons; that he had taken some Pains in digesting and improving it; that he had *number'd his Days*, and *apply'd his Heart to the Wisdom of Considering his latter End*: Which accordingly prov'd to him, just what the Text describes it; and as he *liv'd in Uprightness*, so he *died in Peace*. Now he *rests from his Labours*; his *Works* (we doubt not) *follow him*, and his *Memory is blessed*.

Our Part upon this Occasion will be, to honour the *one*, and to follow the Example of the *other*; to act upon a steady Belief of the Promises made to *Godliness*; to *use this World as not abusing it*; to live in it, as becomes a People, who expect a Removal from it; neither weary of our present Abode, nor afraid of Changing it; but always ready to obey our great Master's Orders, and to shift the Scene, when, or howsoever, he shall be pleas'd to direct it.

And may the Messenger of Death, in whatever Form he shall approach us, find us all thus prepar'd to answer his Demands upon us; free from the Agonies of Confusion, Surprize, and Terror; in a proper Constitution and Bent of Soul; with resigned and holy Dispositions; and with some gracious Assurances from the Spirit of God, that we are falling into the Hands of a merciful Father!

Even so, Lord Jesus, receive us to thy Mercies!

F I N I S.